A Dead Man's Eyes

By William A. Taaffe.

VIRGINIA CITY, Nev., in the flush days of the great Comstock lode: A man strolled down C street one June evening, and then struck into a trail which led upward along the slant of Mount Davidson. He was a large, broad-shouldered, full-bearded man. At a point where the trail diverged he stopped, as if for a short rest, and with his hat in his hand, turned to view the scene below him.

Another man trudged up the trail and paused when he descried the figure ahead of him. He was not cast in the heroic mold of the first. His face betrayed the Latin blood. There was a look of vindictive envy in his small, bead-like eyes as he watched the contented man above him. He wondered if all the things they said about Jim Sanders were true. Why was it he had no partner and worked his claim alone? Was there any truth in the rumor that Jim's claim was paying well, and that he was keeping his money hid instead of banking it? As to his own claim—well, Gus was a good and uncomplaining worker, and the cabin was all right to sleep in. Mining was a gamble anyway, and so was faro. Still one knew there was money in faro, if the cards came rightly. But this evening Jose Casadra was broke. A week before he had won a thousand dollars at a single sitting.

After a little while the object of his gaze moved on and Casadra followed, keeping well in the rear. When he arrived at the Sanders cabin, Jim stood in the doorway.

"Hello, Joe!"

"Hello, Jim!"

"How they comin'?"

"Blamed bad," savagely.

"Better leave the chips alone, Joe—there's nothing in it," said Jim, philosophically. "Why don't you help the poor Dutchman out? More money in that, Joe."

"Advice is cheap," replied Casadra, ill-naturedly. "D'ye think ye'd be willin' to give me anything else?"

"I might," said Jim, calmly knocking the ashes out of his pipe against his boot heel.

"Then lend me a hundred dollars."

"No, Joe, I won't; it wouldn't do ye any good."

"I want none of you or your advice!" exclaimed Casadra, angrily, striding swiftly away and up the trail to the cabin he shared with Gus.

The next morning, on his way to town, he stopped at Jim's cabin. In his mind was a half-formed resolution to say some commonplace thing to Jim which the latter might accept as an apology for his rudeness of the previous evening. There was no sense in making an enemy of him. He threw away his cigarette and hesitatingly approached the door, which stood ajar, and looked in. What he saw startled him. Jim was lying on his side on the bed, with one arm thrown over his head. His big gray eyes were wide open and seemed to be looking Casadra full in the face.

"Mornin', Jim."

There was no response—not even the quiver of an eyelid. Casadra watched him uneasily for a moment, and then turned and went on his way to the town. He wondered if Jim always slept in such a queer fashion, and if such sleep was a sound one? It was late in the night when he passed the cabin again. The door was still ajar, and all was dark within.

The following day, shortly after sunrise, found him before the partly opened door. He had a premonition of what he would see as he suddenly pushed it wide open. Jim was still lying on his side with his arm over his head, the open eyes fixed on the doorway. In two steps Casadra was beside him. He put out his hand, involuntarily withdrew it for a second, and then, with an effort, placed it on the forehead of the man in bed. The touch was icily cold. Down over the heart went the hand; there was no response from that fountain head. Then Jose knew he was not looking upon sleep. Murder or suicide? He threw off the bedclothes, expecting to see blood, but there was none. Just then he saw a sheet of writing paper lying on a table by the bedside. Picking it up eagerly, he read:

"Dear Brother: I have been taken suddenly ill to-night. If the worst should happen, when you come on, go at once into the shaft. In the second drift, exactly 24 feet from the shaft, dig—"

In an instant the paper was crushed in his hand and thrust into his shirt bosom. Furtively he looked around, as if in fear of being detected. He never thought of the body in the bed until his wandering gaze fell upon the pallid face and the distended eyes staring fixedly at him. Nervously he moved to the door; the eyes followed him. He stepped almost behind the bed, and yet felt himself almost within the range of the awful vision. Many dead men he had seen before, but some one had always closed their eyes for them. These eyes seemed to move like those of some old portrait.

It was late in the afternoon when he notified the coroner of his discovery. The body was taken down to the undertaker, and the coroner decided an inquest unnecessary. Sanders belonged to a masonic order that took charge of the funeral arrangements. The fact that Casadra left Virginia the night of the day the body was discovered was noted by some, but no special significance was attached to his departure.

Two months later in a gambling house at El Paso.

A crowd of men sitting and standing three deep about the faro table; the dealer pushing the cards out of the nickel plated box, unconcernedly paying the lucky bets and sweeping away the others; everyone oppressively silent; all eyes on the different stacks of chips and the fateful box before the dealer; the money drawer of the table pulled far out, disclosing the shining twenties; and Jose Casadra "keeping cases," betting heavily, and losing.

He was too old a gambler to betray by an expression which way the weather vane of fortune pointed, and when he had lost three heavy bets in succession, not a muscle of his face changed as he calmly put a large stake on the ace to win and "coppered" the king for an equal amount. A hand reached over the fringe of the crowd and placed a modest number of chips on the same cards. The ace won; the king lost. Like all of his superstitious fraternity, he was quick to notice the slightest incident connected with a change of luck, and now waited for the hand before making his next venture. Again it came over the heads of the crowd, and this time played a combination of the five, six, seven, eight and nine to win, and the queen and jack to lose. Instantly Jose had $200 on the same bets. Once more he was successful. When it came to call "the turn," the party behind him bet "tray-deuce." Jose did the same. The tray and deuce came out in the order named. Then he cashed in his chips a winner, and getting up from the table, pushed through the crowd to see who it was he had so luckily followed.

The man was in a distant corner of the room by himself. Jose's dark face became instantly livid, for he found himself looking into the eyes of Jim Sanders. The eyes were in the head of a tall, heavily-built and smooth-faced man.

"Who—are—you?" weakly gasped Jose, backing away.

"Who am I?" replied the other, in a jocular way, although his eyes belied it. "Who am I? Why, don't you know me?"

"Not—not—Jim?" same Jose's hoarse whisper, as he gazed in incredulous fright. But the blood was slowly coming back into his face. The voice was different, if the eyes were not.

"No, I'm Tom—Jim's brother. Jim's dead, ye know."

"Yes, I—I—know; but your eyes? Damn you! Where'd you get those eyes?" The other advanced a step. "My God! It is Jim!" he almost screamed, as he cringed in abject terror against the wall.

"Say, what kind of a feller are ye anyhow, to be so skeart about a feller's brother? S'pose I hev got Jim's eyes? Ain't they good enough? Jim hed a little the best o' me—he was a half-hour older. I jest kem from Virginny. Everybody thought Jim left a stake, but he didn't, pore feller—leastways, none that I could find. How long since you been thar?"

Some of Jose's confidence was returning. He muttered an unintelligible reply.

"How much money you got?"

The colossal impudence of the question would have astounded any stranger. Jose looked angrily amazed. He started to reply with an oath, when suddenly his face changed.

"Don't look at me like that!" he whined.

"How much money you got?" repeated the big man, calmly but remorselessly.

Jose struggled with himself to keep silent; but the cold, deliberate and judging eyes compelled him to speak and tell the truth.

"Four—thousand—dollars," he faltered, barely above a whisper.

"So you've got four thousand dollars now?" echoed the other, in tones of great satisfaction.

Abject fright again swept into Jose's face. Four thousand? Why, that was exactly the amount he—

The thought was not even finished in his mind. He saw that the eyes read guilt in his own. By an almost superhuman effort he broke the hypnotic spell of the dreaded gaze and looked hurriedly about him for help. He tried to cry out, but his throat was dry. Then his hand shifted nervously behind him for his revolver.

"None o' that! None o' that!" cried his captor, warningly. "I've got my eyes on ye, and I've got good eyes—Jim's eyes, you call 'em. Jim's dead, but I've got his eyes in my head, and I kin see with 'em, too. I kin see you're guilty—guilty o' stealing four thousand o' Jim's good money. I want that four thousand ye got."

Jose, blanched and terror-stricken, made a gesture of denial.

"No use o' denyin' it," resumed his nemesis, coldly and sternly, "for I warn't in Virginny for nothin'. I yeard o' you thar. I was in that drift as well as yourself. Ye left a wide-open trail. Ye don't think I been follerin' ye for nothin', do ye? Ye don't think I've been keepin' my eyes—Jim's eyes—on ye to let ye git away from me now? Come outside and give me that money. Come on, now!"

With his face toward Jose he opened the door and stalked out. And Jose, powerless to resist, followed him into the night.

Richardson, the mine superintendent, and Thompson, the San Francisco stockbroker, sat talking over their coffee and cigars in Virginia's best restaurant:

"You say he saw the whole thing?"

"Yes."

"Well, it certainly is a remarkable story. When did he return?"

"Yesterday, I believe."

"Of whom are you speaking, Richardson?" some one asked from an adjoining table.

"Why, Jim Sanders, that fellow who went into a trance three or four months ago, and so narrowly escaped being buried alive."—San Francisco Argonaut.

Her First.

Adalbert—And so I am the first man that you have ever kissed?

Guinevere—Yes, Adalbert; the others all took the initiative.—Chicago Evening News.

SKELETON IN A CLOSET.

Revenge of a Californian, One of Whose Friends Was Murdered in War Times.

"Morning, colonel."

"Morning, sir," replied the man who was leaning over the fence.

He was a short, thickset man, with a clear and piercing eye, his face shaved smooth, with not the suggestion of a wrinkle; yet his hair was as white as snow. He had a slight southern accent, and his hearty manner of inviting the visitors in and his cordial hospitality were wholly southern. One of the visitors knew him, and had told the other that here was a man with a bona fide skeleton in his closet and that the skeleton had a story. It did not require any persuasion to obtain a glimpse of the skeleton. The owner presently led the way to an outhouse, and, opening the door, displayed the skeleton of a man, badly fastened together, and hanging to the wall by the neck. The Missourian did not object to telling the story.

"That fellow," he said, motioning with his thumb to the skeleton, "was once an acquaintance of mine, and I liked him so well"—this with a laugh—"that I have kept him by me ever since, so that I can come out and stir him up whenever I feel disposed," and he gave the skeleton a dig in the ribs. "It was this way," he continued, closing the door on his acquaintance. "During the war I lived in one of the southern states where I was about the only northern man. They took nearly everything that I had, as time went on; killed my stock, killed some of my people, and finally announced that they were going to kill me. Nearly all the country was terrorized at that time by a good-for-nothing chap whom we will call Jim Conner; that was not his name, but it will do—one name is as good as another now.

"When the war broke out he started in as a sort of independent guerrilla, and began a system of looting and killing. I knew him well, and he sent me word that he was coming my way and was going to burn my house and hang me to the trees in the yard. I sent word back that I was ready for him. We heard of him all around—men shot, niggers killed, houses burned—so that the name of Jim Conner became a thing to scare children, not to speak of men. I was always trying to help northern men, and one time had two or three with me, passing them on as occasion offered. I had not heard from Conner or his raids for some weeks when one day he rode into the yard and swore that he was going to burn the house. We had no means of protecting ourselves except by using a rifle, and with that I tried to pick him off from the top story; but he had picked up one of my friends who had been in the field, and they put him on a horse and stood behind him and shot at the windows of the house, at the same time gathering brush with which they said to burn the house.

"But no one dared to approach the house, as I was a sure shot. I supposed that they would wait until night, and then creep up and burn me out. I kept out of sight, and could not believe they would murder a man in cold blood. But hearing a shout, I glanced through a bullet hole in the shutter, and saw them driving my friend's horse up to a tree—a fine old tree that I had planted as a boy. One of the limbs crossed the drive, and to this they fastened the rope, and drove the horse away, leaving my friend dangling there, and I watching the operation, totally helpless, while

"I HAVE KEPT HIM BY ME EVER SINCE."

they were looking on. Some United States troops finally came along and drove them off and cut the body down, and we joined in the chase. I hunted the gang for weeks, then gave it up, as it was evident that they had given us the slip. After the war I moved to California and came here. I soon heard of a curious character who lived up in one of the canyons the life of a hermit. I never connected his name with Conner, it being more or less common; but when he died one day the story was that he had a bad record back in Missouri—that he had been a murderer, etc.—and it occurred to me that it might be my old enemy, the man I had been after for so many years.

"I can't say that I have a particularly revengeful disposition," said the skeleton owner, "but he had murdered my friend, and I had never given up the hope of finding him, and was always on the lookout. The old fellow was alone and helpless, it seems, with no friends, and they had buried him by the side of his hut. I heard of it a few days later, and employed some men to aid me in the investigation. Conner had a bad saber wound across the face, by which no one could ever fail to recognize him, and when we opened the grave there was the man, while papers which he left showed that he was Conner. I had found him too late to turn him over to the law, so I proposed to hang him where I could keep an eye on him for the rest of my life, and in my will I propose to leave instructions that he shall be left hanging, dangling in the wind, just as he hung my friend. I had his skeleton prepared, as no one claimed him, and hung him up as a warning to anyone of his seed that might follow in his footsteps."—N. Y. Sun.

HE ARRESTED JEFF DAVIS

A Michigan Man Was the Real Captor of the Confederate President.

George Munger, once a corporal in the Fourth Michigan cavalry, enjoys the distinction of being the man who arrested Jefferson Davis when the defeated chief executive of the broken confederacy was trying to escape at the close of the war. The capture, the results of which proved to be so important, has several times been credited to Capt. William P. Steadman, but the facts are really these:

When it was definitely learned that the confederate government had finally evacuated Richmond President Lincoln offered a reward of $100,000 for the capture of Jefferson Davis. All the available troops in the neighborhood of the fugitives' supposed route were thrown forward in pursuit. Among the most zealous and eager of these was the

"HALT, OR I'LL SHOOT!"

Fourth Michigan cavalry, with which Munger rode.

On the morning of May 11, 1865, detachments of this troop came full upon the little camp of fugitives. It was in the pine woods about one and a half miles from Irwinville, Ga. The natives will still point out the place to you—each a different one.

Just as the day was breaking Capt. Lawton and about a dozen troopers walked their horses to the very edge of the wood, and then dashed upon the tents. No one was in sight, except an old negro, who led Mr. Davis' horse, saddled and ready for flight.

In an instant Mr. Davis and his wife came out of a little wall tent by the side of the road. Davis wore a woman's waterproof cloak and a woman's shawl thrown over his head. He started to run down the road.

The soldiers, thinking the figure that of an old woman, let her pass, but Corp. George Munger, was quick enough to see that the "woman" wore heavy riding boots. He drove his spurs into his horse and galloped in pursuit.

"Halt, or I'll shoot!" he cried, with leveled carbine.

Davis obeyed and surrendered.

Later the captive said that, in the darkness of the tent, he had taken the waterproof in mistake for his own, and that his wife had thrown the shawl over his head.

That the actual capture was effected by Corp. Munger there is no doubt. This is positively stated by the commanding officer, Gen. Wilson, in his official report.

Not until 1868, three years later, was the reward of $100,000 distributed and then pretty nearly everyone who had taken part in the pursuit got a share of the money. Four officers each received $300. Then 154 men of the Fourth Michigan cavalry, 78 of the First Wisconsin cavalry, 22 of a detachment that accompanied Capt. Yeaman, and two more of unknown name, belonging to an Iowa regiment, were voted by congress the remaining $88,000 apportioned to their rank and the pay they were receiving at the time. Munger received $300.—Philadelphia Press.

His Incentive.

Gen. Arthur MacArthur, who commanded a brigade at the capture of Manila, and subsequently the division that in its swift and continuously fighting chase of the insurgents executed one of the most remarkable military movements on record, has been an army officer since his seventeenth year. When he was appointed adjutant of the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin volunteers, in 1862, he was so small in stature and so weak in voice that he excited the general laughter of his regiment whenever he piped out a command. One night after dress parade he overheard his colonel remark: "I shall write to the governor to send me a wooden man for adjutant." Stung to the quick by the words and the laughter that followed, he said, quietly: "I'll show them that I can fight, anyway; then maybe they'll come to like me better." Throughout the entire civil war he showed that he could fight. He was frequently commended in general orders, and the close of the war saw the "boy adjutant" transformed into the "boy colonel" and rewarded with a commission in the regular army.—Philadelphia Post.

Show That You Mean It.

Don't tell a man to be good, unless you are willing to set him a practical example.—Chicago Daily News.

WHO KNOWS?

Somewhere in the length and breadth of our land,
Our president—one-day-to-be—
Plays "leap-frog" and "tag," with some lad whom the world
Will yet a great orator see;
For every swift hour that's speeding away,
Is helping to make the great men of some day!

In various nooks 'neath our star-spangled flag,
Our future wise senators sit,
In session 'round histories, grammars and slates,
With studious brows roughly knit;
And hearts all unconscious that they are to be
Bright stars in America's proud destiny!

Now, laddie, who knows but that you may be one
Of our country's brave, valiant men—
Its chief, or a maker of laws, or a son
Who'll bring glory by saber or pen?
A name may be yours which to ends of the earth
Will shine like a star o'er the land of your birth!

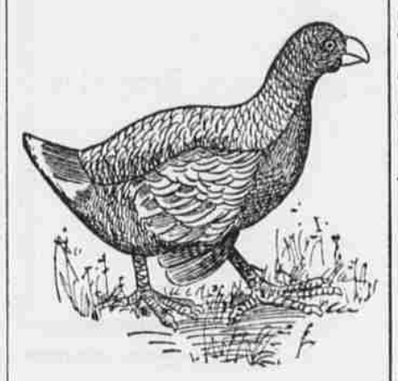
Who knows? So, my lad, train your energies now,
For what they may yet have to do.
Be thorough! Let nothing be only half-done—
Say nothing half-honest, half-true!
Serve well in small things, howe'er humble their state,
And then you'll be fitted to govern the great!

—Golden Days.

THE TAKAHE BIRD.

It Is a Native of New Zealand and Worth Much More Than Its Weight in Gold.

Possibly the rarest of all feathered creatures is the "takahe" bird of New Zealand. Science names it Notornis Mantelli. The first one ever seen by white eyes was caught in 1849. A second came to white hands in 1851. Like the first, it was tracked over snow and caught with dogs, fighting stoutly and uttering piercing screams of rage until overmastered. Both became the property of the British museum. After that it was not seen again until 1879. That



THE TAKAHE BIRD.

year's specimen went to the Dresden museum, at the cost of a hundred guineas. The fourth, which was captured last year in the fiords of Lake Te Anau, in New Zealand, has been offered to the government there for the tidy sum of £250.

Thus it appears that the bird is precious; worth very much more than its weight in gold. The value, of course, comes of rarity. The wise men were beginning to set it down as extinct. Scarcity aside, it must be worth looking at—a gorgeous creature, about the size of a big goose, with breast, head and neck of the richest dark blue, growing dullish as it reaches the under parts. Back, wings and tail feathers are olive green, and the plumage throughout has a metallic luster. The tail is very short, and has underneath it a thick patch of soft, pure white feathers.

Having wings, the Takahe flies not, resembling therein its remote congener, the Diornis. The wings are not rudimentary, but the bird makes no attempt to use them. This is the more wonderful, as it belongs to the family of rails, which is in the main a family of strong flyers. The legs are longish and very stout, the feet not webbed, and furnished with sharp, powerful claws. Both legs and feet are a rich salmon red in color. The oddest feature of all, however, is the bill, an equilateral triangle of hard pink horn. Along the edge, where it joins the head, there is a strip of soft tissue much like the rudimentary comb of a barnyard fowl.

The bird is a wader, but lives on grain, the big beak to the contrary notwithstanding. Dissection showed that this latest specimen had a crop full of grass, snipped into bits from a quarter to an inch in length. Its habitat is the colder part of New Zealand, where it finds asylum among glacial lakes and fiords. Fossil remains show that it was once sparingly distributed over the whole country. If there is still a land where it is plenty it must lie mighty close to the south pole.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Closest Shave on Record.

Lumbermen were rolling logs down a bluff into the St. John's river, Canada. Near the foot of the hill there was a slight ridge, and now and then a log would strike it and bound into the air, landing well out into the river. Sometimes a log went astray and got stuck, and then a man had to go down to dislodge it. Once when this happened a man was prying at a log when two men came to the top of the bluff with another log, and by some mischance it started down. They called to the man below, but there was no chance to seek shelter. Down rolled the log, gaining velocity with every foot, and then it struck the ridge, gave a great bound, and went high over the man's head. The lumbermen call it the closest shave on record.

A SNOW-WHITE ROBIN.

How One of These Rare Creatures Was Discovered by a Lover of Birds and Nature.

A large tract, not very far from Chicago, unfrequented even by sportsmen, has been taken possession of by birds and "beasties." Hundreds of them live here the year round. Warm-weather birds spend the summer months here, and throngs of hardy little creatures shelter themselves here throughout the winter and listen for the spring.

One day last September I pushed my way through this wood down to the creek to see what condition the fences were in—for sometimes old Mosquito carries off the rails—and to say good-by to the summer birds. It was a lucky day for me. Besides being near to a lark when he rose with his song in his throat, I flushed a covey of quail from the edge of the brush, I heard a flicker drum his best tune on a half-decayed limb, and, best of all, I saw a white robin! This was the way it happened: I was coming home about four o'clock, when just before me in a little open space on the ground were five or six robins, supping on some berries. Among them was one white as the driven snow. I could hardly believe my eyes. Involuntarily I stood still and riveted my gaze on the little albino. The flock lingered several seconds on the ground and then flew, lighting in a tree not far away. I moved carefully till I could command sight of this tree, and in a few minutes I saw them fly again, this time to disappear in the tree tops. The fact which impressed me most in my observation of this robin and its companions was that neither the white one nor the red-breasts seemed conscious of any peculiarity in its appearance. Unlike the white blackbird of the old Latin reader, the bird appeared to be on the most friendly terms with those around it, picking up seeds and chirping with the rest. The little company was doubtless preparing to go south, for robins are wont to gather in flocks in the woods just before migrating.

All robins have more or less white in their feathers, but a robin perfectly white is extremely rare. Once in a great while Mother Nature, for some reason not understood by naturalists, forgets to put any dark coloring matter in a robin's plumage. The young of this freak of nature are not necessarily white, but they inherit a tendency to albinism.

Robins have a habit of returning year after year to nest in the same place, and if Prince White Feather spreads his wings in Mosquito creek woods next summer I know a person who will be there to cultivate his acquaintance.—Justine Iddings Baldwin, in Chicago Record.

HOW THEY ARE BURIED.

Australia's Aborigines Have a Curious Way of Disposing of Their Dead Friends.

Among the Australian aborigines strange customs prevail, which advancing civilization will not wipe out. The graves which they make are curious. Tall poles are arranged symmetrically above the place where the dead person is buried, and some of the poles overlap, forming a sort of skeleton wigwam. The others bear a resemblance in

AN AUSTRALIAN GRAVE.

a quaint way to telegraph poles, and the effect of the whole is something like that of a tenderly decorated but oftentimes grotesque burial place of a canine pet or singing bird in a family of civilized people whose children have taken it upon themselves to attend to the obsequies.

When Otis Was Nonplused.

Only once, it is said, has Gen. Elwell S. Otis, the American commander in the Philippines, been nonplused. That was when as a boy he was a student in the Rochester academy. He was a natural leader, and for four years he kept the faculty in a state of agitation. His most famous prank was the smuggling of a donkey into the class room, and tying the animal securely to the head professor's desk. When that gentleman made his appearance, he neither smiled nor exhibited any trace of anger. "Young gentlemen," he said, quietly, "I see you have wisely chosen your instructor. Good morning." That time the laugh was on Otis.

Old Cat Adopts Ducklings.

A lot of little ducklings is a funny family for a cat to have, but in Salem county, N. J., there is just such a family as this. Pussy had lived with the ducks in the barnyard all her life, sleeping among them every night, and when some one took all her little ones away she was lonely without them and stole 13 little ducklings from an old mother duck. She carried them all down in the cellar, one by one, one night, so the mother duck could not coax them away, and when Mr. Allen, who owns the cat and the ducks, went down into the cellar the next morning he found all the little baby ducks huddled about the cat keeping warm.

A Happy Couple.

"They're such a happy couple!"

"Outrageous—he's blind and she's deaf and dumb."

"Yes, but he can't see her when she scolds him."—Judge.